

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festivals
14th Festival 1973

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THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL of new plays at the Questors, Ealing, this year wound up its entries with a flourish in the grand manner and a taste of late-night revue. The last main play was John Norman's "**Crincum Crancum**", set in the England of post-French revolution and pre-Napoleonic defeat. The period of Jane Austen, Rolandson cartoons and a mad king. This is an epic and a tragedy; its main dramatic fault is that the central story, that of a young doctor who hangs for his oblique involvement in an attempt on the life of George III, is so much the architypical history of the man in the middle that the whole thing becomes a sort of shadow play and the characters lose their third dimension.

Brechtian alienation, then. Yes, but bleached Brecht, with white costumes for the statutory greys and browns and a determined elegance to the rituals and pacings. One thing Mr Norman can certainly do is to write dialogue; another, even rarer gift is that of being able to convey chunks of history without signalling the fact either to those who know it already or those who couldn't care less. His George III is authentic, properly dramatised and truly pitiable.

Harpichord beats that added much to the occasional tensions have been composed for this production by Don Kincaid. The set, black and white muslin drapes to set off the lower acting area, was designed by Norman Barwick and the costumes by Carol Metcalfe. The lighting was intelligent and the direction, which could have pruned the script down even further, was by Robin Duval.

"**The Nutty Slack Spectacular**," the late-night entertainment, was about Welsh Wales, coal and acting. It had good running joke—an actor desperately trying to career through the "ages of man" speech—a very funny skit on "Under Milk Wood," a cod trial and an earthy Italian drama couched entirely in culinary terms. Not everything made its point as neatly as these, but it was civilised, intelligent and almost slick enough to be nostalgic.

M.A.M.